(a) whether in a recent report on the country's transport sector, the World Bank has observed that the current practice of State-level regional transport authorities being the nodal agencies for regulating bus services and setting fares in most of the cities needs to be re-examined;

(b) if so, whether according to the report, it is necessary in view of the need for greater integration between transport planning traffic management and public transport operations at the local level;

(c) if so, what are the other suggestions made thereon; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to implement the suggestions made?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI]: (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Some of the other major suggestions are introduction and promotion of competition in transport infrastructure and services, giving users and other stake holders representation in planning and implementation of transport services and infrastructure, private participation in provision, operation and maintenance of transport infrastructure etc. The suggestions pertaining to Central Government are already under implementation. The suggestions pertaining to States/UTs have to be implemented by them.

Condition of NH-34

1061. SHRI. SK. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that road condition in NH-34 from Kolkata Airport to Siliguri of Darjiling district has been deteriorated since long;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) by when the said road would be undertaken for major repairs; and

(d) by when the expansion of the road would take place and to what extent?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI]: (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) NH-34 starts from Kolkata airport and ends at Dalkhola. Improvement of this road from Kolkata airport to km. 31 and km. 398 to Dalkhola has already been completed. The stretch from km.31 to km.398 has been taken up for capacity augmentation and strengthening with loan assistance of the Asian Development Bank. This work is scheduled to be completed by 2006-07. Four laning of the stretch from Dalkhola to Siliguri (NH-31) is in progress. It is scheduled for completion by 2007.

Funding of highways

1062. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to hike in petrol prices to fund highways, as reported in the Asian Age dated the 23rd December, 2002;

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal;

(c) the amount that would be garnered out of this and the highways that would be funded;

(d) whether it is also proposed to enhance toll tax for the purpose; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the amount that would be earned as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI]: (a) and (b) This Ministry has proposed to levy an additional cess of 30 paise per litre on petrol and diesel for funding of Second Phase of the National Highways Development Project (NHDP).

(c) An amount of around Rs. 2100 crores per year is expected to be garnered out of this additional cess for funding the Second Phase of NHDP.

(d) and (e) At present there is no proposal to enhance the user fee (toll tax). The user fee earlier notified is linked to wholesale price index.